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tices in their area. The Attorney General's Office has supported the use of BARJ through its Illinois Youth Court Association and commended the summit participants on their efforts to strategically implement BARJ in the state of Illinois. For more information on the summit, contact Larry Sachs at the ICJIA at (312) 793-1306.

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According to Bureau County Teen Court Coordinator Heidi Schaefer, "Bureau County teen court provides a choice in which [teens'] behavior can be corrected without having a criminal record, and in return, (they) offer something to the community and their families." For further information about Bureau County teen court, contact Heidi Schaefer at (815) 872-2001 ext. 221.

For more information about the IYCA, contact Jessica Ashley, the IYCA coordinator, at (312) 793-0001/TTY: (312) 814-3374 or check us out on the Web at www.ag.state.il.us by clicking on "children" and then the IYCA link.

Resources

- **American Bar Association**

Youth Court Volunteer Training Manual (cost \$45)
Call (800) 285-2221.

Roadmap: Youth Courts: Young People Delivering Justice (Informational booklet available online at www.abanet.org)

- **National Youth Court Center**

www.youthcourt.net (Contains a list of programs nationwide, resource information, training announcements, quarterly newsletter, and more.)
Mailing List (You will be notified of events and sent publications.) Available online, or call (859) 244-8209.

- **Street Law**

Community service education lessons for youth courts are available online at www.streetlaw.org/youthcourtlelessons.html or e-mail nycc@csg.org.

- **Urban Institute**

The report on the youth court study, "The Impact of Teen Court on Young Offenders," can be downloaded from www.urbaninstitute.org



Illinois Youth Court Association
Office of the Attorney General
318 W. Adams St., 12th Floor
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Youth Court Association Holds Strategic Planning Meeting

On August 12, 2003, the Office of the Attorney General held a meeting to learn more about developments in Illinois youth courts, and to obtain input to help guide the Illinois Youth Court Association (IYCA) toward continued success. A total of 37 participants – including representatives from the Illinois Juvenile Officers Association, Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority and nine youth court programs – attended the meeting. The director of the National Youth Court Center participated by conference call. Hartgrove Hospital in Chicago provided lunch.

This very productive meeting allowed participating programs the opportunity to offer the IYCA suggestions for enhancing youth court in Illinois, including training and technical assistance, state standards, networking opportunities and program recognition and support. The meeting proved to be another critical step in developing an effective association to better serve youth court programs and citizens of Illinois.



Dundee Township Peer Jury: Ed Zordani, Bethany Stiegemeier, Megan Messina, and Pastor Phil Zilinski.

Balanced & Restorative Justice Summit Draws Participants Statewide

The Illinois Juvenile Justice Reform Provisions of 1998 added a purpose and policy statement to the Illinois Juvenile Court Act adopting Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) as the juvenile justice system philosophy. However, the implementation of BARJ has been inconsistent and sporadic. A statewide committee led by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) decided to address this issue, and a three-day BARJ summit ensued.

Approximately 100 juvenile justice professionals attended the summit, from September 24th through 26th in Springfield, with the goal of developing a strategy to systematically and effectively implement BARJ programs and principles statewide.

Traditional justice philosophies focus on punishment or rehabilitation of offenders. The BARJ philosophy encourages offenders to repair the harm that they caused to individuals and communities. BARJ seeks to address the needs of the victim, offender and community, and actively involves all three in the justice process. There are three main goals of BARJ:

- Accountability;
- Competency development; and
- Community safety.

Programs that incorporate the principles of BARJ include youth court (or peer jury), victim-offender mediation and family group conferencing.

This Summit divided participants by profession and region so that the resulting groups may continue to work together to support BARJ prac-

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My Peer Court Experiences

James Finch, Vermilion County Peer Court

I am 14 years old and attend the 7th grade at North Ridge Middle School. I was adopted by my foster mom when I was 2 years old and have been with her every since. I am very happy and lucky to be in such a nice family. I am a good student and am involved in Workforce Challenge, Young Men Aware, Art In Motion and chorus. However, I most enjoy participating in Vermilion County's Peer Court.

I first became involved in the Peer Court program in 1999. I decided Peer Court would be a good for me because I wanted to help other youth in the community. Peer Court gives kids a chance to learn their lesson the first time around and stay out of trouble. It also gives volunteers like me a chance to help out in the community and meet new friends. I have acted as a juror, clerk, bailiff, defense attorney, and prosecuting attorney. Peer Court has taught me what

NOT to do and the difference between right and wrong. Watching the offenders and all the different crimes committed showed me how stupid it is to break the law.

I am very active in Peer Court. I am now the president of the Peer Court Youth Advisory Board. Last summer, I was involved in a three-day camp with Peer Court. The camp was very exciting and physical. My sister also volunteers for Peer Court and participated in the camp. Every year Peer Court has fundraising events that I help out with. These events include: the Art Auction; Market Day; and Car Wash.

Every year Peer Court has Community Service events that volunteers and offenders can participate in. I have volunteered for the following events every year: Share Food Distribution; Community Clean-Up Projects; Civic Center Festival of Trees; Kiwanis Pancake Breakfast; and Downtown Danville Crow Fest. Due to my involvement, I was even interviewed by our local newspaper.

CPS Peer Jury Program Honors Attorney General Lisa Madigan, Leaders in Restorative Justice

On June 5, 2003, the Chicago Public Schools Peer Jury Program sponsored a ceremony honoring youth and adult peer jury volunteers, as well as individuals who have championed restorative justice and youth courts in Illinois.

Those recognized included Attorney General Lisa Madigan; Judge Sophia H. Hall; Judge Curtis Heaston; Catherine Ryan, Chief of the Juvenile Justice Bureau in the Cook County State's Attorney's Office; Bernadine Dorn, Director of the Children and Family Justice Center at Northwestern University; and Carolyn Pereira, Executive Director of the Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago.

In 1996, Alternatives, Inc. and Senn High School worked together to develop the first peer jury in the Chicago Public Schools (CPS). In November 2001, Alternatives, Inc., in partnership with CPS, developed a citywide Peer Jury Advisory Committee to expand the program to 22 new high schools throughout Chicago. Each par-

ticipating school now has a team consisting of students and adults from the surrounding community who are responsible for implementing their particular peer jury program. In addition, CPS now includes peer juries as part of its Discipline Code.

For more information on the CPS Peer Jury Program contact: Patricia Zamora, Alternatives Inc., 773-506-7474, pzamora@alternativesyouth.org



Cara Smith, Policy Director, accepts an award on behalf of the Office of the Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan from Judge Sophia H. Hall.

National Youth Court Training Held in Illinois

The Constitutional Rights Foundation held its National Conference – Youth Court Training of Trainers, Professional Development Institute – from April 14th through 16th, 2003 in Oakbrook, Illinois. The Illinois Youth Court Association was proud to co-sponsor the event.

Each state with a youth court association or coalition sent two delegates to the training, and, as host, Illinois had the opportunity to send eight delegates. Illinois' participants came from around the state, representing Stephenson County, Bureau County, Lake County, Peru, Springfield and Chicago.

The conference aimed to familiarize trainers with balanced and restorative justice materials from the National Youth Court Association, American Bar Association, Constitutional Rights Foundation and Street Law, Inc. Participants gained a greater understanding of balanced and restorative justice, and prepared to train others in their home states using the relevant materials.

Innovative Peer Jury Honored

On October 21, the Chicago Council on Urban Affairs honored Lawrence Hall Youth Services' Peer Jury Project with its distinguished Neighborhood Award. Founded in 1865, Chicago's Lawrence Hall is one of the oldest child welfare agencies in the nation, and provides an array of services to at-risk youth and their families. Its peer jury program is the first one developed and implemented in a child welfare agency. Representatives from Lawrence Hall and many of its peer jurors accepted the award at the 24th Annual Neighborhood and Diversity Awards Dinner in Chicago.

ILLINOIS YOUTH COURT ASSOCIATION ADVISORY BOARD

*The Illinois Youth Court Association is sponsored by the
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In May 2003, Bureau County Circuit Court Clerk Michael L. Miroux and members of his staff implemented a teen court program in Bureau County. The teen court now gives young people from across the county an arena in which to take on increased responsibility in the community while developing a greater understanding of and respect for the law.

Bureau County teen court serves the community by providing an alternative to juvenile court for thirteen to seventeen-year-old, first-time, non-serious admitted offenders. The teen court acquaints first-time offenders with law and judicial procedures, and provides a non-threatening atmosphere where offenders can interact with juries of their peers instead of other authority figures. Offenders must admit guilt as a precondition to being diverted from the traditional juvenile justice system to the teen court. The teen court sessions, moderated by attorney Jamie Thomas, operate monthly at the Bureau County Courthouse.

Since its inception, the Bureau County teen court program has been overwhelmed by community support. An early alliance between the Clerk, the IYCA, and the Illinois Coalition of Community Services has been instrumental in helping the program become an effective alternative to the juvenile justice system. The program also received firm support from the judges of the 13th Judicial Circuit, the Bureau County State's Attorney, the Bureau County Public Defender's Office, local police agencies, the local Bar Association, local businesses and the county's school districts.

Funding for the program comes from donations from the Bureau County Bar Association, local businesses and the Circuit Court Clerk's Office, which provides staffing for program administration, such as data-entry and project coordination. Volunteer and community support have made program start-up relatively inexpensive.

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